DPD Director's Rule 8-2012

Applicant: City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development	**Page** 1 of __	**Supersedes:** NA
	Publication:	**Effective:**
Subject: Transportation impact analysis (TIA) evaluations for applications exempt from SEPA environmental review	**Code and Section Reference:** SMC 23.52.008	
	Type of Rule: Code Interpretation	
	Ordinance Authority: SMC 3.06.040	
Index: City of Seattle Land Use Code/Technical Standards and Procedural Requirements	**Approved** **Date** _____ Diane M. Sugimura, Director, DPD	

Purpose

Certain categories of developments that are not subject to State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) environmental review may be required to submit a transportation impact analysis (TIA), as set forth in Land Use Code Section 23.52.008.

A TIA is a study of the potential transportation impacts of a development on the surrounding transportation system. The purpose of the study is to document transportation impacts (related to all modes) associated with a proposed development and to identify mitigation for those impacts. This Rule provides more detail about preparation of the TIA.

This requirement relates to residential or mixed-use developments (residential + non-residential uses) that are located in Urban Centers, or in Urban Villages that contain light rail station areas where SEPA review thresholds are higher than in other areas. The purpose is to evaluate potential transportation impacts and mitigation for projects that are not subject to environmental review pursuant to SMC 25.05.800.A.

Background

Seattle's categorical exemption thresholds (updated in 2012) define what sizes of development must receive SEPA review. Higher "infill development" SEPA thresholds were defined in 2012 for residential and mixed-use development in some areas that are located within an Urban Center, or within an Urban Village that contains a light rail Station Area Overlay District, as long as the area has not reached its defined growth targets. See Director's Rule 9-2012 for information on which of those areas have the higher "infill development" thresholds.

The Land Use Code requires that applicants disclose information about a development's probable traffic trip generation and impacts on streets and traffic. This helps DPD staff evaluate whether substantive impacts on local streets and transportation facilities are likely and project conditioning will be necessary.

In practice, this can vary from provision of basic facts and calculations to a more detailed analysis, depending upon the total size and location of the proposed development.

This Rule provides guidance for applicants to understand how much information should be provided, and how that should be prepared.

Rule

Transportation impacts generally relate to the size of the development – the number of trips generated – and their effect on local streets. Project location and context may also contribute to the potential for impacts. Reference materials such as the "Trip Generation" manual from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) can be used to estimate the number of future traffic trips generated. Trip tables in Director's Rule 5-2009 indicate how to identify where that traffic would travel.

For the development projects that fall within the affected size ranges, either a simple abbreviated transportation impact analysis or a more standard-length impact analysis is required. (See pages 5-8 of this rule for more information.) These are meant to be comparable to the level of information that was required in the past for SEPA environmental review. The "standard-length" analysis will be required for the larger category of developments that may be more likely to add adverse traffic congestion to roadway corridors or intersections. Effects on transit operations, adequacy of transit, freight impacts, pedestrian and bicycling facilities and operations can also be requested.

It is recommended that applicants use the services of a qualified expert, such as a transportation consultant, to prepare this transportation evaluation. Consultants with expertise in transportation analysis will be able to efficiently prepare the TIA needed for either smaller or larger development proposals.

DPD's application intake procedures confirm that appropriate transportation analysis information is included. If it is not, the application process may be delayed until such information is provided.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS BY APPLICANT

The steps an applicant should take are described below.

STEP 1: Determine whether an "ABBREVIATED" or "STANDARD-LENGTH" analysis is required

Zones, within an Urban Center, or an Urban Village that contains a light rail Station Area Overlay District	**"Abbreviated" Analysis Required**	**"Standard-Length" Analysis Required**
Any Lowrise, Midrise, Highrise, Neighborhood Commercial, General Commercial or Seattle Mixed zone	51 to 100 dwelling units	101 to 200 dwelling units
Any Downtown zone	81 to 150 dwelling units	151 to 250 dwelling units
In the zones listed above, if the residential unit count in mixed-use** development is less than the listed size ranges, but the non-residential use exceeds 12,000 square feet:	12,001 – 20,000 sq. feet	20,001 – 30,000 sq. feet*

*If the non-residential use proposal falls within this size category, then a standard-length analysis will be required to examine the impacts of the entire proposal including the residential use.
** Note: A proposal must have at least 50% of its gross floor area in residential use to meet the "mixed-use" definition in SMC 25.05.800.A.2.h, or it would require SEPA review and this rule would not apply.

PLEASE NOTE:

- This Director's Rule only applies if a development proposal is not undergoing SEPA environmental review. If SEPA review is occurring, it already covers the topic of transportation impacts.
- This requirement is determined according to the total dwelling unit count in a "development" which means the entire set of buildings that will be built in a given proposal, NOT the unit count for any one structure within a multi-building development.
- A proposal must have at least 50% of its gross floor area in residential use to meet the "mixed-use" definition in SMC 25.05.800.A.2.h. If it does not, the proposal would be subject to SEPA review instead of this Rule.
- A "live-work" development is considered by DPD to be a "non-residential" use; thus, any live-work units in a development do not need to be included in the count of dwelling units (they would be considered in the transportation study to the extent that they are non-residential uses that would generate activity).
- This Director's Rule would not apply to a development that entirely consists of "live-work" spaces plus other commercial uses because it would not meet the definition in this Rule for "mixed-use" development.

- If a development consists of large-bedroom-count residential units (such as 8 bedrooms per dwelling), for purposes of determining the need for this study, the number of units will be calculated as one per every 2 bedrooms.
- If existing buildings will remain on the property in addition to the proposed development, the square footage of non-residential space and residential units (if present) must be included in area and size calculations for comparison to the size ranges.

STEP 2: Work with a qualified expert to prepare a transportation impact study

After identifying whether you need an abbreviated or standard-length analysis, DPD recommends that applicants work with a qualified expert such as a transportation consultant. The expert will use appropriate reference materials, such as the ITE's *Trip Generation* manual and trip origin-destination and distribution guidance in Director's Rule 5-2009, to create information about the development's transportation impacts.

An applicant may also choose to present more than the minimum information in order to show a more complete estimate of transportation impacts. For example, the applicant's analysis may also estimate the number of trips that will be made by bus, bicycle or walking instead of using an automobile, which would reduce the overall potential for transportation impacts on local streets.

An option for those with experience or knowledge in transportation analysis: As an alternative to using a qualified expert such as a consultant, an applicant may wish to prepare the transportation impact study information on their own. If they do so, DPD will note this choice at intake. This does not prevent DPD from issuing a correction notice at a later date if subsequent review indicates a need for more transportation-related information.

Transportation Impact Analysis Exemption: DPD may be able to provide a "traffic report exemption" if a proposal has no meaningful potential for substantial transportation or traffic impacts. This may occur if the proposal is relatively small (e.g., 50 or fewer dwelling units), or if only non-congested roadways and intersections are nearby, or if the net increase in traffic would not be significant compared to traffic from existing development. Such exemption requests should be made by completing the 'Transportation Study Exemption Request Form' at the end of this Director's Rule and submitting this information to DPD.

Contents of ABBREVIATED analysis

The information that is helpful for the smaller-sized range of developments is comparable to the basic information provided in the past on a SEPA environmental checklist. For an abbreviated analysis, the minimum information an applicant must provide is the following:

1. Number of additional daily vehicle trips generated by the development.

Use the ITE Trip Generation Manual, 8th Edition or successor edition.

2. Number of additional "peak hour" vehicle trips generated by the development in the afternoon peak hours.

   Use the ITE Trip Generation Manual, 8th Edition or successor edition

3. The proposed access/egress routes, such as alleys and streets on which automobiles will enter and leave the site's parking garage or lot.

   This should mention whether new curbcuts will be proposed or not.

4. The applicant's estimate of what proportion of the development's traffic is likely to use which streets.

   In some cases, traffic may be directed to primarily one street, while in other cases a driver may have two or more options to enter or leave an area.

5. Identify whether the nearest intersections are controlled by stop signs, traffic lights, or other form of traffic control.

6. Describe existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the immediate site vicinity, using city master plan resources such as the bicycle map located at:

   - http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/bikemaps.htm

   and street maps located at:

   - http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/ped_sper_apa.htm

7. Are any pedestrian or bicycle facility improvements included in the proposal? If yes, please describe.

Contents of STANDARD-LENGTH analysis

A standard-length transportation impact analysis is required for larger sized development proposals, to provide information for the planner to efficiently evaluate traffic impacts. This is comparable to typical traffic studies prepared by transportation consultants for mid-sized or larger developments in Seattle neighborhoods.

Providing a complete TIA may help expedite the review timeline by allowing the planner to make conclusions more quickly and identify whether any mitigation is needed. The following information is required:

1. Identification of existing conditions, future baseline conditions, and number of additional daily vehicle trips generated by the development.

   a. *Information to describe the local streets, existing traffic volumes and turning movements, and traffic control devices on affected streets and intersections;*

b. *Level of service information or alternate equivalent measures of traffic operation, delay, volume-to-capacity (v/c) ratio for affected intersections and/or streets;*

c. *Traffic safety information – accident/collision history, latest 3 years;*

d. *Trip Generation: use the ITE Trip Generation Manual, 8th Edition (or successor), or alternate method;*

   i. *Calculate reductions from basic trip generation, for internal trips, pass-by trips, and mode choices (e.g., proportion likely to use modes other than single-occupant vehicle travel), at the applicant's discretion.*

   ii. *Calculate any other reductions justifiable due to the nature of the development or site.*

   iii. *Summarize the resulting trip calculations for residential and commercial uses*

2. Number of additional "peak hour" vehicle trips generated by the development in the afternoon peak hours.

   a. *Using comparable methods described under #1 above, calculate peak hour vehicle trip generation*

3. The proposed access/egress routes, such as alleys and streets on which automobiles will enter and leave the site's parking garage or lot.

   a. *This should mention whether new curbcuts will be proposed or not.*

4. The applicant's estimate of "trip distribution" and assignment – what proportion of the development's traffic is likely to use which streets.

   a. *Use methods described by DPD Director's Rule 5-2009, or equivalent alternative, to identify trip distribution and assignment to the surrounding roadway system.*

5. Identify the probable extent of traffic impacts on affected streets and intersections

   a. *Afternoon peak hour turning movement impacts on identified intersections, and interpretation of the potential magnitude of impact, including roadway level of service, intersection level of service, and/or other methods of evaluating impacts on street and intersection operations.*

   b. *Site access operations, including information such as peak hour volumes, delay and/or level of service, and relationship to freight operations if relevant.*

6. Summarize relationships and potential for impacts to transit service, non-motorized facilities in the site vicinity, and traffic safety, to the extent affected by the proposed development

   a. *Description of proposed bicycle, pedestrian, transit, and freight facilities and operations as provided for in existing multimodal plans. This should include*

whether there are gaps in pedestrian connections from the site to the nearest transit stop or gaps in continuity of bicycle facilities in the site vicinity.

b. Describe whether the development would adversely affect sidewalks, bicycle lanes, transit facilities, and whether it would contribute traffic to a high accident location.

c. Describe any planned improvements or reconstruction of sidewalks or streets adjacent to the development site.

7. Describe existing parking conditions and evaluate parking impacts
   a. Use ITE's Parking Generation, 3rd edition (or successor edition), and/or other alternate method for calculating parking demand with the development.
   b. Describe proposed parking supply.

8. Evaluate transportation concurrency
   a. Use methods described in DPD Director's Rule 5-2009.

DPD will use the TIA to evaluate impacts and assist in identifying mitigation measures, which may include, but is not limited to, mitigation methods identified in SMC 23.52.008.B.

STEP 3: Include the transportation information in application materials

An applicant is advised as part of a "pre-submittal" process to review this Rule and complete the attached worksheet or prepare other materials that will allow for efficient intake and review of their development proposal. Providing the appropriate information upfront will help the planner and DPD's transportation planner to more quickly identify any concerns about traffic and transportation from a development.

The transportation information is required to be prepared and submitted to DPD at the time of permit intake. If such information is not present, DPD may delay completing the application process until such time as the information is available. After the application is accepted, the permit review by DPD staff may generate a request for additional information, which will be detailed in a correction notice.

City of Seattle
Department of Planning and Development (DPD)
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P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

TRANSPORTATION STUDY EXEMPTION REQUEST FORM

Project Number: _____
Project Address: _____
Property Owner's Name: _____
Contact Name: _____
Contact Address: _____
Contact City/State/Zip: _____
Contact Phone Number/E-mail: _____

Description and size (e.g., number of residential units, square footage) of existing permitted use(s) on site:

_____
_____
_____
_____

If parking exists on-site, location of curbcut(s) and amount of parking:

_____
_____

Description of proposed project, including the size of all proposed uses:

_____
_____
_____

If parking is proposed on-site, location of curbcut(s) and amount of parking proposed:

_____
_____

Please briefly describe the reason(s) for the exemption request:

_____
_____
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